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## REMEMBRANCE DAY MESSAGE 1962

Remembrance Day is inevitably a day of memories—memories which in the minds of some of our citizens stretch back to the last days of the nineteenth century when rugged young Canadians embarked for service in the Boer War.

On Remembrance Day, 1962, Canadian grandparents will recall that 60,000 of their generation fell in the cause for freedom during World War I. Parents will recall that 42,000 of their generation made the supreme sacrifice in World War II. Thousands of veterans, both men and women, will hold particularly poignant memories of comrades killed, wounded and missing after battles on sea, land and in the air. Though years have intervened since the close of world-wide conflict, the tragedy, sadness and horror of war come flooding back into memory. Momentarily past and present are one.

Among a great many scenes in the rich tapestry of Canadian history is the momentous Battle of Vimy Ridge, a decisive Allied victory in 1917 during which Canadians won a lasting reputation as superb assault troops. So vital was this engagement in developing the confidence of the young country that it has been said, "Canada was born as a nation on Vimy Ridge."

Following World War I the people of France graciously granted in perpetuity 250 acres of Vimy land as a National Battlefield Park. Today on the crest of the famous Ridge stands the magnificent Vimy Memorial which emphasizes nobility and peace rather than the grimness and desolation of war. The eminent Canadian sculptor, the late Walter S. Allward, who designed the monument, described his remarkable creation in these words:

"At the base of the strong impregnable walls of defence are the Defenders, one group showing the Breaking of the Sword, the other the Sympathy of the Canadians for the Helpless. Above these are the mouths of guns covered with olive and laurels. On the wall stands a heroic figure of Canada brooding over the graves of her valiant dead; below is suggested a grave with helmet and laurels. Behind her stand two pylons symbolizing the two forces—Canadian and French—while between, at the base of these, is the Spirit of Sacrifice, who giving all, throws the torch to his comrades. Looking up they see the figures of Peace, Justice, Truth and Knowledge for which they fought, chanting the hymn of Peace. Around these figures are the shields of Britain, Canada and France. On the outside of the pylons is the cross."

The complete structure of the Vimy memorial is approximately 200 feet square at the base and about 125 feet high. It is composed of the wall of defence on which rests a supporting base bearing the two towering pylons. The hard, enduring stone of the monument was quarried in Yugoslavia—from the same quarries used by emperors when the Roman Empire was at its peak of glory. Under such circumstances it was only fitting that skilled Italian sculptors should assist in the difficult operation of carving. The ten-year task of engineering construction of the Vimy Memorial became the responsibility of a Canadian engineer, Captain Unwin Simson.


So massive is the monument and so admirable its location that it may be seen from a distance of fifty miles across the French plains. At night it is unusually striking in appearance when its floodlit surface glows brightly through the darkness, a beacon to freedom.

The Vimy Memorial was unveiled on July 26, 1936, by His Majesty, King Edward VIII and the President of France, M. Albert Lebrun. On this historic occasion over 7,500 Canadian war veterans, taking part in the Vimy Pilgrimage, were present at the ceremonies.

While Canadian citizens across the nation, are holding their Remembrance Day Services on November the Eleventh of this year they may well pause to reflect that a similar service is being held on hallowed ground in the shadow of the great stone shafts that rise above the crest of Vimy.

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The Canadian Memorial at Vimy Ridge

*"They died for Justice—Justice owes them this:  
That what they died for be not overthrown."*

*—Bernard Freeman Trotter*